

4. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council to take appropriate measures with a view to the regulation and improved co-ordination of economic, social, scientific and technical activities within the United Nations system and, in that connexion, calls the attention of the Council to the need for greater precision and efficiency in the exercise of its functions and powers, as defined in the Charter, in particular in Article 63;

5. *Instructs* the Economic and Social Council, having regard to paragraph 4 above, to prepare and submit to the General Assembly, for consideration at its twenty-seventh session, proposals concerning effective measures to remedy present shortcomings in the co-ordination of economic and social development programmes and thereby to eliminate overlapping, duplication, over-staffing and over-expenditure of budgetary funds.

*1798th plenary meeting,
30 July 1971.*

1623 (LI). Organization of the work of the Council

The Economic and Social Council,

Considering that its role as a principal organ of the United Nations should be reaffirmed and that its authority should be enhanced and its methods of work improved to enable it to discharge more effectively the functions conferred upon it by the Charter of the United Nations in the formulation of general economic and social policies to meet the challenges of development,

Reaffirming that, because of the expansion of the activities of the United Nations system during recent years, greatly increased importance has been assumed by the functions of the Council as set out in its resolution 1156 (XLI) of 5 August 1966, namely its functions as:

(a) The governing body for the United Nations work programme in the economic, social, human rights and related fields,

(b) The co-ordinator of the activities of the United Nations system of organizations in these fields,

(c) A forum for the discussion of issues of international economic and social policy, and for formulating recommendations for the United Nations system of organizations,

Noting that paragraph (83) of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 2626 (XXV) of 24 October 1970 and providing for an over-all appraisal by the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, of the progress in implementing the Strategy, will bring these functions into sharper focus and require increased emphasis on the definition of priorities and the resolution of conflicts of interests within the United Nations system,

I

1. *Decides* that in its review of the over-all economic and social situation the Council should formulate new policy recommendations to meet the challenges of

development, define major lags and constraints in the field of development and recommend ways and means for their removal;

2. *Decides* to arrange its programme of work, taking into account the rules of procedure of the Council, to provide for:

(a) A short organizational session in January;

(b) A session in the second quarter of the calendar year devoted mainly to social questions, the reports of subsidiary bodies and elections;

(c) A session in the third quarter of the calendar year at Geneva devoted to major questions arising from the world economic situation and in alternate years a debate on the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, with a view to assisting the General Assembly in the over-all appraisal, and to the co-ordination of the activities of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields;

(d) A brief resumed session during the session of the General Assembly to deal with items that cannot normally be considered at the regular sessions of the Council;

II

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the members of the Council, to develop a more rational agenda designed to avoid duplication of discussion and to enable the Council to concentrate on policy issues, grouping items on related issues and providing for the consideration of important substantive issues on a longer-term planning cycle, where this is appropriate;

4. *Reaffirms* its decision that the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should be transmitted to the General Assembly without debate, unless the Council decides otherwise, at the specific request of one or more of its members or of the High Commissioner, at the time of the adoption of its agenda;⁹²

5. *Decides* that, as a general rule and in order to avoid repetitious debates, consideration of the reports of all its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies should be confined, as far as possible, to matters which require decisions or guidance from the Council;

6. *Invites* the Secretary-General, in consultation with delegations, to circulate a more detailed schedule of work for each session and to ensure that the annotated provisional agenda for each session is more informative;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare for each substantive agenda item a short document summarizing the previous consideration of the question and the various options for decision by the Council, as well as the consequences likely to arise from such decisions;

⁹² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 1A (E/4735/Add.1)*, p. 3.

III

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take urgent steps to reform the nature, scope and form of documentation submitted to the Council to ensure that Governments can review reports adequately and also that the Council is able to concentrate on issues requiring inter-governmental consideration, that reports submitted to the Council are action-oriented and concise (normally not more than thirty-two pages), and present clear and precise recommendations drawing attention to issues that should be taken into account by the Council and possible alternative courses of action proposed for the Council and their implications, and to ensure also that, in the case of meetings of experts convened by the Secretary-General, only a concise report by the Secretary-General setting out the relevant recommendations for action by the Council is submitted;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that these guidelines are observed in reports submitted to the Council and its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies, beginning in 1972;

10. *Decides* that the reports of its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies should contain, in addition to a résumé of the discussions, a concise summary of recommendations and a statement of issues requiring action by the Council, and that all resolutions adopted by its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies should normally be in the form of drafts for approval by the Council;

11. *Decides* that the Council's report to the General Assembly should be reorganized to provide the Assembly with an effective basis for discussion, and that it should consist of a clear statement of the issues on which Assembly action is required and a summary of the Council's discussions and a record of its decisions, including details of votes;

12. *Reaffirms* the importance of the strict observance of rule 14, paragraph 4, of the rules of procedure of the Council and decides that the calendar of conferences should be drawn up in such a way as to permit the observance of this rule;

13. *Invites* the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency to continue to provide analytical reports, bearing in mind the recommendations in Council resolution 1548 (XLIX) of 30 July 1970;

IV

14. *Welcomes* the participation in its deliberations, in accordance with rule 75 of the rules of procedure of the Council, of Member States which are not members of the Council, in the conviction that such participation will ensure a politically more solid and wider basis for decisions.

*1798th plenary meeting,
30 July 1971.*

1624 (LI). Measures to improve the documentation of the Council

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting the difficulties encountered by delegations as a result of the late date on which they sometimes receive working papers for the session in the language of their choice,

Recalling rule 14, paragraph 4, of its rules of procedure,

Recalling further its resolution 1090 E (XXXIX) of 31 July 1965,

Noting that General Assembly resolution 2247 (XXI) of 20 December 1966 asked the Secretary-General to ensure that documents should be available to the Member States in sufficient time and simultaneously in the working languages envisaged,

Noting further that General Assembly resolution 2292 (XXII) of 8 December 1967 requested the Secretary-General to take all measures to ensure a more effective presentation and communication of the documents in due time and simultaneously in the working languages,

1. *Again calls upon* the Secretary-General to take such action as will ensure that the documents submitted to the Council and to its subsidiary organs are available to Member States in sufficient time (at least six weeks before the beginning of the session) and simultaneously in the working languages of the Council and of its organs, without prejudice to the other languages;

2. *Decides* that, for the future, the calendar of conferences shall be so established that paragraph 1 above can be complied with and requests the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to submit to it, at its fifty-third session, practical suggestions for attaining that objective;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General, after consultations with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and after obtaining any outside advice which he may think helpful, to review the measures currently in force with respect to the preparation, translation and distribution of documents submitted to the Council or to its subsidiary organs;

4. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its fifty-third session, through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, a report giving the results of the study defined in paragraph 3 above and indicating what new measures have been taken or envisaged to improve the present situation.

*1798th plenary meeting,
30 July 1971.*